

I oppose loosening the rules designed to promote and protect diversity of media ownership. These rules were adopted to ensure that the public would receive a diverse range of viewpoints from the media, and not simply the opinions of a handful of media conglomerates. The cable ownership cap is a crucial element of our democratic media, and it should not be weakened.

I worked for 20 years for a local newspaper that was purchased four years ago by Knight Ridder. The paper has been ruined -- weakened, marginalized, trivialized, sucked dry, its best people forced out as "too expensive," though they were never too expensive before.

Good local news media provide an extremely important service for a community -- they continually define the community, helping to set the community's direction and purpose, sustaining its heart and soul. To witness so many local newspapers and TV news outlets being gutted and turned into franchise outlets (to say nothing of the complete absence now of local news on the radio) is heartbreaking -- and I believe it harms democracy at its very core.

Calvin Demmon